(b) the details of the trade agreements made by the Government with each of these countries during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BULLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Sir, India has trade relations with almost all the major countries in East Asia, West Asia, East Europe, West Europe, America, Africa, CIS, Latin America and other regions.

(b) Briefly, most of the trade agreements stipulate the facilitation of bilateral trade between the two countries, efforts to expand bilateral trade, according to MFN treatment to each other in the matters tariffs, custom regulations, etc. effecting of payments in freely convertible currencies, providing assistance in holding trade fairs and exhibitions, periodic review of implementation of the agreement through the mechanism of Joint Commissions/Trade Committees, exchange of information/delegation etc. Names of countries with whom trade agreements were signed during the last three years are given in the attached statement.

STATEMENT

Names of countries with which trade agreements were signed by Ministry of Commerce during the last three years

1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Ivory Coast	South Africa	Burkina Faso
European Union	Croatia	Namibia
Slovak	Tunisia	Georgia
Czech	Israel	
—Slovenia	Myanmar	
	(Border Trade Agreement)	
Tajakistan		
Armenia		
Moldova		
Belarus		
Uzbekistan		
Lithuania		
Latvia		
Estonia		
Oman		

Jute Mills

1963. DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of jute mills functioning in the North Eastern Region and the number of workers employed therein, mill-wise;

(b) whether these mills are facing problems on account of shrinkage in market due to competition from lower priced synthetic substitutes; and

(c) if so, the remedial steps being taken to tide over these difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a)

State	Name of Jute Mills	Average workers (Nos.)
Assam	Assam Co-Op Jute Mills Ltd.	800
Tripura	Tripura Jute Mills Ltd.	1,300

(b) and (c). Jute Mills in the country have been generally facing problems, interalia an account of shortage of high jute prices; as well as competition from cheaper synthetic substitutes. The scenario in the North Eastern States is also affected by the limited local market potential, higher transportation cost, high production cost, besides poor machinery condition, low labour & machine productivity etc. The Government has taken measures aimed at encouraging modernisation of Jute Mills as also development of value added jute diversified products to promote newer uses of the fibre.

Inflation Rate

1964. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the differential between the movements of the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) and the Consumer Price Index in India during the last three years with the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the point-to-point variation in WPI helps in projecting the rate of inflation at about 45 percent of the actual average increase in prices over the same period;

(c) whether the Government propose to revise its formula for calculation of the rate of inflation on a realistic basis hereafter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) The movement of the current series of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) and Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) for the last three yeears is listed in the attached statement. Variation in the magnitude of the two indices is due to the difference in the composition and relative weights of their basket of commodities.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d). The proposal of revision of the current series of WPI and the modality to be adopted for computation of inflation rate alongwith other relevant issues are under consideration of the Working Group set up for the purpose under the Chairmanship of Prof. Y.K. Alagh.

STATEMENT

Monthly Index of WPI and CPI(IW)

Month		WPI Base: 81-82	CPI (IW) Base: 1982	Absolute Difference
1	2	3	4	5
Apr.	1993	234.6	245	10.4
May		237.0	246	9.0
Jun		239.8	250	10.2
Jul		243.1	253	9.9
Aug		247.0	256	9.0
Sep		250.9	259	8.1
Oct		252.2	262	9.8
Nov		251.6	265	13.4
Dec		251.7	264	12.3
Jan	1994	252.7	263	10.3
Feb		254.8	265	10.2
Mar		257.6	267	9.4
Apr		262.3	269	6.7
May		265.4	272	6.6
Jun		268.1	277	8.9
Jul		271.3	281	9.7
Aug		272.1	284	11.9
Sep		273.2	288	14.8
Oct		274.7	289	14.3
Nov		276.2	291	14.8
Dec		279.9	289	9.1
Jan	1995	283.3	289	5.8
Feb		284.7	291	6.3
Mar		284.9	293	8.1
Apr		288.4	295	6.6
May		291.7	300	8.4
Jun		292.6	306	13.4
Jul		294.2	313	18.8
Aug		296.1	315	18.9
Sep		297.4	317	19.6
Oct		297.9	319	21.1
Nov		299.2	321	21.8
Dec		297.8	317	19.2
Jan	1996	297.4	315	17.6
Feb		297.9	316	18.1
Mar		299.4	319	19.6
Apr		301.4	324	22.6
May		304.1	328	23.9

Outstanding of BHEL

1965. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any proposal to recover the outstanding amount of Rs.1600 crores owed by the State Electricity Boards (SEBs) to Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) through the Central Government's appropriation from States entitlements of 'Plan fund';

(b) if so, the modalities to be adopted for effecting the recovery;

(c) whether there is any resistance from States to this proposal on the ground that recovery of State Electricity Boards dues from States entitlements of 'Plan fund' would abridge their constitutional rights to central allocations; and

(d) if so, the alternative arrangements contemplated to liquidate SEBs dues to BHEL?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). As per the Government's decision, a total sum of Rs.509 crores (undisputed outstandings from SEBs/OPPs as on May' 90) was paid to BHEL out of the plan assistance of the concerned states in four annual instalments from 1990-91 to 1993-94. After that, there has been no such recovery, through adjustments against allocation of Plan funds to the States.

(c) and (d). Recovery of BHEL's dues by way of adjustment against allocation of Plan funds to the states did not find support from the states on the ground that it would reduce the resources available for funding annual plan of these states thereby adversely affecting the implementation of the annual plans.

However, BHEL has been pursuing the matter with the concerned SEBs and the State Governments for the release of the outstanding dues. Department of Heavy Industry is also extending necessary help to BHEL in persuading the State Governments to release BHEL's outstanding dues from time to time.

Identity Cards to Votera

1966. SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Identity Cards of the voters are being used for many purposes other than casting the votes in elections; and

(b) if so, whether the Union Government have asked the State Governments through the Election Commission to enable the Identity Cards to voters latest by March 31,1997?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Yes, Sir,